

Church of South India: A Seven Year Plan to Protect the Living Planet

On Becoming a Green Church: When all the congregations become Green Parishes it will become a Green Diocese and when all the Dioceses become Green Dioceses it will become a Green Church. The Church of South India Synod Board of Ecological Concerns urges 21 Dioceses to become Green Dioceses. From the Church of South India Environmental Resource Book.

Mission statement

The Church of South India Ecological Concerns Committee seeks to create awareness among all people about environmental and ecological concerns and thereby to care for God's creation. It endeavours to encourage people to refrain from abuse of nature's resources and to strive to keep the earth a habitable place for all. We encourage parishes to incorporate ecological concerns in their order of worship and include both advocacy and direct action for social justice and the integrity of Creation in missional activities. We encourage the active participation of all people of good will through prayer, partnership, and involvement, which will help humanity to return to an eco-friendly life style.

Our Pledge

We are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally, and as members of society. We will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life. We will take measures that work to limit consumption and reduce wastes. We will practice care for creation. We will check up all our activities, to ensure our continued commitment.

Our Church and Our Plan

The Church of South India (CSI) has 4 million members in 21 dioceses and 14,000 parishes throughout India and northern Sri Lanka, mostly in the south, but stretching as far north as Orissa. It is a union of churches of varying traditions – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed – and was inaugurated in September 1947. It runs 2000 schools, 130 colleges, 104 hospitals, and 500 hostels looking after 35,000 children as well as some 50 rural development projects. It is the only Church in India to have a commitment to the environment in its constitution. This plan was drawn up by the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee following a regional conference in Eco-leadership and training in 2008.

Our Programmes to Become a Green Church

These include: Green Diocesan Awards, Green Parish Award, Green School Awards, Green Home Awards, Diocesan Ecological Convention, Environmental Rally, Rainwater Harvesting, Interactive Eco-Bible Study Programme, Environmental Day Celebrations, Ecological Sunday, Resource Persons Training Camp, Avoiding Throw away Plastics, Eco training programme during Vatican Bible School, Organic farming, Planting of Trees, Pilgrimage, Regional Conferences, Parish level Eco Committees, District/Area level work, Eco Clubs in Schools, Eco-literature, Eco-church Architecture, Vegetable Gardens, Handbook, Eco-Management in Schools and Churches.

THE 7 KEY AREAS

1. ASSETS
2. EDUCATION
3. WISDOM AND PASTORAL CARE
4. LIFESTYLES
5. MEDIA AND ADVOCACY
6. PARTNERSHIPS AND ECO-TWINNING
7. CELEBRATION

1. ASSETS

Bishop Thomas Samuel in his presidential address to the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee, at the end of the August 2008 conference, called upon all Christians to work in this World, taking God as a partner. Basing his discussion on Psalm 8, he said that humanity is the Crown of Creation, but that this does not mean that Humanity has the right to dominate over everything in nature. Instead it means that God has given us the responsibility to nurture and take care of Creation. And that God should be our partner in all such activities, or else disaster will be the net result. Ecological Stewardship is a very important objective written into the Constitution of the Church of South India, and eco-conservation is part of the mission and ministry of the Church. He particularly called upon all Dioceses to increase green cover in South India, by planting Vetiver, Jatropha and Mangroves, which will help to reduce greenhouse gases.

1. Plant Trees and Manage Communal Land: The members of Church of South India will plant as many trees as they can to improve the green cover. Forests are one of the most effective carbon sinks and critical for preserving the ecological balance. Besides other plants, emphasis will be given in promoting the planting of Vetiver, Jatropha and Mangroves. These three plants are all ecologically significant, especially in the context of Global warming and the shortage of groundwater. The proposal to promote their planting in all lands touched by CSI has been accepted and if any Dioceses would like to plant the above the plants in a massive scale, funding will be given. In addition the Director of BDM has agreed to provide necessary assistance to the dioceses to prepare a project report and simultaneously will also explore possibilities of providing financial assistance from different agencies for other planting programmes. In June 2009, the CSI Synod urged all its 4 million members to plant at least one tree during the month of June 2009. This was linked to the UN Environment Programme's tree-planting initiative. It also urged individual parishes to manage their churchyards to benefit wildlife eg through planning a Nature Trail pointing out different trees, plants, wildlife, and stone used in the building and gravestones.

2. Green lighting: We will promote the use of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) which use one-third of the power of conventional bulbs. The Indian government has launched a massive programme to popularise CFLs by launching schemes to encourage consumers to buy them. It can lead to reduction of 10,000 MW of electricity.

3. Green Fencing: Instead of concrete compound walls that consume loads of cement and brick, not to mention steel (all huge carbon emitters) there is a rising trend of growing fences through cultivating bamboo and vetiver instead. They are far more eco-friendly and act as great sinks for carbon. Hence we promote the use of bamboo and vetiver in fencing of Churches and of School campuses.

4. Green Water Charging: We will promote the digging of mud pits in all the lands of our churches and on the land of our congregations in order to harvest rain water which will recharge the ground water. Bore wells that form the major source of India's water supply are now beginning to run dry. Digging for them is getting even deeper and costlier. Groundwater accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the available water resources in India, meeting 85 per cent of the rural requirement and 50 per cent of urban and industrial needs. But most states are experiencing an alarming fall in the water table as groundwater is being over-exploited.

There is need for mandated water harvesting and recharge zones in urban areas. There is also need to recharge deep aquifers and prevent their over-use. India gets an average of 600 mm of rainfall a year. This means a total precipitation of 4,000 billion metric tonnes—a mini sea of water deluging us every year. **Yet, as much of 75 per cent of this is lost due to run-offs.** As a result many parts of the country are water-stressed and in danger of turning into water-scarce regions in the next 30 years. That may sound far off but the interim could be harsh with daily battles over water.

There is an urgent need to improve water-harvesting systems and put the deluge to more productive use. As part of the CSI Synod programme for June 2009 each member was asked to dig one pit to harvest rainwater falling on their rooftop. This was needed to help to stop desertification, and to encourage people to be more thoughtful of where their water comes from.

5 Green Equipment: We will promote the use of energy efficient instruments as far as possible.

6. Green cooking and lighting: Community biogas plants are back in business. Cow dung and human waste is used as cooking gas and for lighting in villages. It helps improve sanitary conditions and ends the search for firewood. We will promote the use of bio gas plants. In 2008 the Christian Women's Fellowship in Kottayam, Kerala, India set up a snack centre in the middle of their town. It was the first outlet in Kottayam to run on biogas. Set up costs were comparatively high – at 40,000 Rs (around US\$1000) - but they are confident that not only will they make it up within a year from reduced fuel bills, but that they will become an example of environmental excellence and an inspiration to other businesses and households.

7.Green Home Audits: We will promote a green audit in our homes. The Synod ecological committee is requesting all the Diocese, Congregations and Institutions to undergo Green Auditing, and has made a sample questionnaire available. "We have to assess how ecologically sound we are."

8. Protect threatened and endangered species and their habitats: Dioceses are urged to love nature, animals and plants as you love yourself. When animals or birds are domesticated to provide food or other products or services, pay attention to ensure their proper care and welfare. Modern biotechnology techniques have made it possible to introduce changes in animals and birds to enhance the quality and or productivity of products derived from them life milk, meat, leather, etc., but such changes affect their natural lifestyles and may some times cause them considerable discomfort.

The ethics of introducing such changes in living creatures needs to be examined in the light of scriptural teachings. In addition, animals in the wild must be recognised as having certain needs for maintaining their life, their "creatureliness" as willed by their Creator, their habitats, and their kinds. Destroying the animal world upsets not only the animals but also the ecological balance. Such destruction results from poaching, abusive use in entertainment, animal sacrifices and pollution and destruction of their homes and habitat. Abusive use always takes place when cruelty is involved, and/or the species is over-exploited. Trade in animals and animal parts must always be done in accordance with strict ethical criteria.

Examples of Diocesan action on Assets

Dornakal Diocese is located in 5 revenue districts in Andhra Pradesh, one in Orissa and one in Madhya Pradesh. It is covered with thick forests, mountains, rivers and fields. Bishop Thandrigaru has instructed educational institutions to plant trees at their institutions and also at Church premises. Now our Churches are green. For example at Cathedral and Kothagudem it has grown a beautiful garden in front of the Church. We are planning to have gardens in all the Churches. There are two Hospitals in our Diocese covered with gardens and trees. We are thankful to our Bishop for encouraging the Diocese to be a green Diocese, for educating people to avoid the use of plastics and to use paper bags, and for educating the people to use the VermiComposite in agricultural fields and not to waste water. A rainwater harvesting project has been proposed and is planned before the 2010 monsoon. Three Diocesan Compassion hostels were furnished with solar panels in 2009. There are a total of 20 such hostels in the Diocese, and each is now offering the slogan “each one plant one tree” – along with the degree college, the Junior college and six schools.

Thoothukudy Nazareth Diocese has the motto: Cleaner and Greener Villages. It is strengthening eco-clubs in schools and Colleges, encouraging plastic-free villages and towns, supporting rallies of students and youth, making time for planting of trees, promoting eco-awareness for pastors and Church leaders, and participating in a rainwater harvesting programme.

Karimnagar Diocese is involved in tree-plantation, supplying seed to women for kitchen gardens, and planting mango saplings

Karnataka Northern Diocese is adopting a village, and undertaking rain water harvesting.

2. EDUCATION

The Church of South India is the only Church in India with a special wing for environmental concerns. Hence we can use the official platform of the Church to educate the Clergy and laity on eco-theology

CSI urges dioceses and parishes to plan educational campaigns through which the members of the congregations are made aware of environmental issues and why God’s creation is hurting. Recommended processes included:

- **Designating a person** and select a committed group of lay people or teachers to form an Eco- Management committee. The committee becomes responsible for guiding the development of the management plan, for instituting and monitoring practices, and for being alert over time to better and improved approaches, means, and technologies of eco-management.
- **Creating an education plan** to inform, teach, and train all users of the buildings and grounds of the church and School in eco-management. Such a plan can call for special events and training sessions as well as integrate the concerns into the regular curriculum. Education is critical to the success of any conservation program.
- **Waste Management education in schools**, with pupils designing posters, writing essays, producing a drama, and making other presentations to the adults about recycling. Study the economics, environmental considerations, and long-range consequences of recycling for developing a sustainable society. As a hallmark of operation should be the phrase "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."

- **Curriculum:** A variety of educational and promotional programs need to be created as a part of launching the new approach to facility management. The consciousness of the staff, membership, and other users needs to be raised significantly and in sync with each other. The educational phase also needs to be an ongoing process, written into each age-level of education (including adults). Reminders should be highly visible throughout the buildings and grounds. Every decision must have built into it an environmental consciousness which is not merely one more component, but instead, runs throughout the whole, as does any other portion of our basic commitment and covenant with God.
- **Eco-leadership Programme** The Synod Ecological Concerns Committee decided to give Green Leader Manager Training to Diocesan leaders. A Green Leader should: “organise programmes, raise funds, propagate ecological ideas, be a coordinating link between the diocesan authorities and the people... Training is necessary for uniform activities in all the dioceses.” The first regional conference in Eco-leadership took place in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Kerala between September, and November 2008. On each occasion the host Diocese bore the expense of boarding and lodging, with travelling allowances given from CSI Synod. In addition an eco-leadership programme was held from 21-22 August 2008 at CSI Centre, Chennai, which included a dynamic full day’s training based on the UN-ARC Seven Year Plans. Three leaders from each diocese attended the programme, and reported greatly improved motivation to act on ecological issues. In July 2008 a three day Training programme in biodiversity, stewardship and conservation was organized for 16 teachers representing all our Diocesan Higher Secondary Schools and each in charge of a branch of the National Green Corps (NGC). The training included a field trip to the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Eco-resource training camps** The first three-day training for resource persons from different dioceses took place in September 2008 at Kottayam. It was a new experience for the Clergy. Here are some of the comments: “The resource persons training camp really ignited our minds and souls with a new outlook”. (Rev. Abraham Premchand, Presbyter of Holy Cross Cathedral, Nandyal, Andhra). “Until now we did our mission activities slowly, but after the training I feel a sense of urgency” (Rev. J Joshua Kamachander from Coimbatore Diocese, TN). “After this training I have decided to organize an eco awareness conference for clergy and laity in Karnataka. We will identify a village and make efforts to transform the people to an eco-friendly life style. The training was impressive in all respects”. (Rev.S.S Sakkari from Karnataka Northern Diocese) “I am really fortunate to be a participant of this training programme, I am inspired and have decided to be a committed eco-leader in our diocese”. (Rev.D. John from Karimnagar Diocese, Andhra).
- **Green Diocese, Green Parish, Green College and School Awards** (see ‘Celebrations’)
- **Other:** CSI schools should have a bulletin board dedicated to environmental issues, place signage throughout both the building and the grounds as a tool for instruction, gentle reinforcement, and awareness. And both schools and seminaries are recommended to include environmentally related symbolism in the classrooms and along the hallways.

Examples of Diocesan Action on Education:

Kanyakumary Diocese is committed to strengthening the Eco-clubs in Schools and Colleges, with ecological awareness classes arranged through Churches. They have requested the Bishop to start a department in the Diocese for ecology. Other plans include eco-lessons in Sunday School, competitions on environmental topics in essays, paintings, and slogan writing. Also World Environmental Day celebration, Environmental Sunday will be celebrated (also see Celebrations) The Ecological Concern Committee (ECC) of CSI Kanyakumari Diocese conducted an Environmental Awareness Programme on Global Warming in February 2009. The objective was to

boost awareness about global warming among technical students and Sunday school teachers, to conserve the Earth for the welfare of future generations.

Coimbatore Diocese will arrange Ecological Sundays, as well as Ecological awareness programmes to teachers and students, Eco-leadership programmes, an Eco-youth rally, Eco-stickers and handbills, competitions in eco-topics and eco awareness programmes for clergy and lay leaders

Trichy Tanjavore Diocese is strengthening eco-clubs in Bishop Heber College, Bishop Thorp College, Bishop's college of Nursing. Also introducing green clubs in schools, and environmental orientation for the Christian Women's Fellowship

Madurai Ramanad Diocese Eco clubs in Schools and Colleges, training programmes for teachers, competitions in eco-painting, eco-drawing, eco-essays etc. Tree planting and Ecological Sunday.

Madras diocese is promoting environmental training for teachers, students and pastors. The Eco-Vision Department organised a seminar for 150 Sunday School teachers. It also runs a study circle to promote eco-awareness, and has arranged seminars on flora and fauna, cosmic ecology, global warming, and marine ecology.

Karimnagar Diocese has organised an eco-painting competition for children, with the theme "My World A Dream World." As one of the organisers reported, "the response was wonderful. The Spirit of Ecology started to take its flame in young hearts too."

Karnataka Northern Diocese has formed an Ecological committee, creating awareness among the Church members and school students

East Kerala Start Eco-clubs in schools and parishes. Networking with other organizations

Madhya Kerala Diocese is organising Green School awards, a deputation of environmentalists to all the parishes to deliver sermon on ecological Sunday, Eco-pilgrimage, Eco-clubs in all schools, competitions in eco-essays, seminars on eco-architecture, distribution of vegetable seeds, training for clergy, youth, Sunday school teachers, Eco-Committees in Diocesan, District and pastorate levels, seminars, networking with other eco-groups. It has been awarded Green diocesan Award from CSI Synod.

3. WISDOM AND PASTORAL CARE

The General Secretary, Rev Mosses Jayakumar, in his inaugural address to the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee in August 2008 reminded those gathered that creation is God's gift. Hence a human being has no authority to pollute this earth. Christians should have a concern for other life forms in this earth. Actions in this area include:

* **Seeing Climate Change as a Moral Issue:** The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has been alerting all the Dioceses to recognize climate change as a moral issue. It is important for us to encourage members of our congregations to take action to limit their contributions to climate change as an expression of their faith. We are called to encourage one another and build up each other. (1 Thessalonians).

* **Setting up Creation-awareness centres:** Each Green congregation should see itself as a centre for exploring the scriptural and theological foundations for caring for Creation. We also will learn from people suffering the severe impact of environmental degradation. Churches should seek to develop as creation-awareness centres in order to exemplify principles of stewardship for their members and communities, and to express both delight in and care for creation in their worship and celebration. They should particularly aim to produce curricula and programmes which encourage knowledge and

care of creation. The Christian community must initiate and support the process of education (for all its members) on the Christian approach to environmental ethics. When all the congregations in a Diocese become Green Parishes it will become a Green Diocese, and when all the Dioceses become Green Dioceses it will become a Green Church. The CSI Synod Board of Ecological Concerns urges 21 Dioceses to become Green Dioceses.

* **Laying the Scriptural and theological basis for congregational actions.** This can provide an exciting study with the entire church and School, though the Eco-Management Committee may want to lead it.

* **Forming special study groups** or task forces around specific environmental issues, Bible study, or theological concerns

* **Reporting of Ecological Activities of the Diocese for self-reflection and improvement**

* **Encouraging prayers and liturgies which include God's Earth** and people working to protect biodiversity.

Diocesan Action on Theological Wisdom

Madras diocese Eco-Study circle in every first Tuesday of the month

Karimnagar Diocese Eco-awareness programmes for youth , clergy, and women.

Dornakkal Diocese Seminars at Diocesan and Congregational levels.

Medak Diocese conducting awareness programmes to pastors and heads of institutions, eco-clubs will be started in schools, support governments programmes, prepare charts, banners, slogans, street plays, etc.

Nandyal Strengthen eco-committees, Eco-awareness programs for pastors and clergy

Karnataka Northern Diocese Formation Ecological committee, creating awareness among the Church members and school students

Karnataka Southern Diocese Boosting awareness through literature, Ecological Sunday Seminars, special orders of Worship

Madhya Kerala Diocese has organised a deputation of environmentalists to all the parishes to deliver sermons on Ecological Sunday

4. LIFESTYLES

As members of Green Church, we commit ourselves to personal lifestyles that contribute to the health of the environment

* **Environmental tithing:** We challenge ourselves, particularly those of us who are economically secure, to tithe environmentally. Tithers would reduce their burden on the earth's bounty by producing 10 percent less in waste, consuming 10 percent less in non-renewable resources, and contributing the financial savings we have made to Earthcare efforts. Environmental tithing also entails giving time to learn about environmental problems and to work with others toward solutions.

* **Using and advocating public transport and other environmentally sound alternatives:** Leave your car and two-wheeler at home whenever possible. Instead, choose public transport, carpooling, walking, bicycling. When purchasing a new car or two-wheeler, look for the most fuel-efficient model you can find.

* **Fasting:** Choose a day to fast. For 24 hours, eat no solid foods and drink only water and fruit juice. Set aside time to pray. Meditate on your broken relationship with creation and ask God to lead you to repentance and a new faithfulness.

* **Play nature games at Sunday school** and coordinate walks/hikes through local nature trails, preserves and parks. Bring along identification guides to trees, plants and birds to try and figure out what you are seeing.

* **Support local, national, and international conservation charities**

* **Monitoring use of resources.** The CSI SECC has taken up eco-conservation very seriously. The first thing we did is SWOT analysis, which really helped us in knowing our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We will also promote a green audit in our homes.

* **Recycling and living more simply:** The two gospel words, “Saving” and “Restoring” have very practical implications for our use of the earth’s resources. Begin saving and recycling, newspapers. Donate money to an environmental organisation or to an international ministry among the poor. Use recycled paper for Christmas cards and gift wrap. Respect the environment in the gifts you select. Look for ways of saving energy (and money) in your home. When purchasing appliances, look for low-energy, high-efficiency models. Conduct a thorough audit of the energy use in your church buildings and programs. Look for ways that energy can be saved. Turn off lights, fans, and air conditioners when not in use.

* **Gardening:** Plant a corner of your yard or borrow a corner of someone else’s. Learn what crops thrive in your climate, what pests might be likely to attack them, and how you might combat those pests with little or no resort to chemicals. Find out what organic fertilizers are readily accessible. If you prepare your own food, begin composting vegetable wastes (such as rinds, pulp, eggshells and seeds). This need not be an overwhelmingly complex process. Simply bury your waste in your gardening area, or deliver them regularly to a friend who gardens. Talk to a Christian farmer about the issues he or she faces in working the land lovingly. Water - so ordinary, so taken granted - is a wonderful gift from God. Examine your water-use habits. How can you save water?

* **Reduce carbon consumption as a spiritual exercise:** CSI wants to equip its members to explain to others the reasons for their actions – which are excellent ways for your congregation to proclaim the good news and build up the body of Christ.

* **Encouraging rediscovery of old agricultural techniques:** Modern methods of agriculture with their inputs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides may lead to pollution of groundwater and other problems. Such pollution can produce health problems for human and animal populations. Chemical fertilizers fail to sustain the natural nutrients in the soil, resulting in reduction of crop productivity and eutrophication of surface waters. Often in the past, pests were controlled and the nutrient status of the soil maintained by practices such as crop rotation, inter-cropping, multiple cropping, etc. It is necessary to identify successful traditional practices and upgrade them as appropriate in order to develop or recover appropriate site-specific technologies which enhance crop productivity without degrading the environment.

Examples of Diocesan Action on Lifestyles:

Karnataka Southern Diocese proposed a Seven Year Plan under the ARC-UN Programme, through establishing an ECO MONITORING AND TRAINING CELL to oversee programmes and activities directed towards protecting, preserving and promoting ecology with branches at least to District Level. Experts and specialists will be nominated as members.

Karimnagar Diocese is running Eco-prayer day once in a month, Eco-Christmas programmes

Madhya Kerala Diocese: Eco pilgrimage

5. MEDIA AND ADVOCACY

Rev. Mosses Jayakumar requested the Church to encourage the local and national government to deliver policies that properly take the environment into account.

- * **National Consultation:** CSI is encouraging dialogue between Eco Church Groups and secular eco groups
- * **International Ecological Conference:** In 2008 the Madhya Kerala (Central Kerala) Diocese organized an International eco conference. This helped us to link up with International eco activities and organizations, and as a direct effect CSI is now working fully with the ARC-UNDP Seven Year Plan Programme, and has created this plan which will be launched internationally at Windsor in November 2009.
- * **Increase government support for environmental protection and energy conservation programs:** Churches are recommended to keep track of how your governmental leaders react or respond on environmental issues. Make your congregation aware of the statements and actions through a regular column in your church newsletter. Ask people to consider this information when voting.
- * **Explore ways of getting media coverage for an issue that concerns you.** Letters to the editor, paid advertisements, and public service announcements are avenues open to everyone. Public policy makers are far more likely to respond to an issue that has generated public concern.
- * **Bring people together in an annual Eco-Stewardship conference** with invited experts. Stagger the Eco-Stewardship conference about six months apart from the Environmental Festival.
- * **Use your own media: Publicize what is happening on the environment** in your regular church/School newsletter and bulletin; in a periodic "Eco-Times" church/School publication; in the local newspaper, radio, and television; and in your denominational news outlets. Make it a key element within your church's website. Talk it up in the community as a point of significant expression of faith.
- * **Create a Diocesan Eco Calendar:** All Diocesan eco committees are requested to publish an eco-calendar showing their activities, and get the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
- * **Eco-news Bulletin:** CSI has decided to publish an eco-news bulletin every six months. Reports of all the activities in the dioceses will be published. It is the duty of the ecological committee member representing the dioceses to collect all the materials from the Dioceses and send it to the convener.

* **Books and CDs:** the Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has recently published four books on this issue including *Reconciling With Nature* (in English, Telungue, Karnataka, Tamil and Malayalam), *God is Green, Eco Vision and Mission* (for Sunday School Students) and *A Christian response to ecological crisis*. It has also issued 1000 CDs containing ecological songs from Sunday School Children.

* **Manifestos:** the CSI was a signatory to the Uppsala Interfaith Climate Manifesto 2008 of Faith traditions addressing Global Warming

* **Special Environmental issues in magazines.** For example Thirusabai Malar Diocese declared the September 2008 issue of its monthly magazine *Thirusabai Malar* as an Environmental Special. Articles, short stories, and information on environmental issues were published

* **Advocate for clean air, both indoors and outdoors, and clean water:** The principle that the “polluter pays” and that “one person cannot exploit or pollute another person’s source of living” must take account of who the polluter is. He or she is often the actual consumer on whose behalf the producer acts. Shaping technology so as to prevent pollution and or reduce it at source can often be much cheaper than cleaning it up later. The Bible insists that the environment be protected.

Diocesan Action on Advocacy and Media:

Trichy Tanjavore Diocese organises Youth Movement and Sunday School Eco awareness through Diocesan magazines, documentary films, Posters, street plays, as well as writing regularly on environmental issue in the Diocesan magazine.

Tirunelvely Diocese dedicates a page in the Diocesan magazine for environmental issues

Karimnagar Diocese runs fundraising and ecological orientation through Diocesan Magazine

Medak Diocese supports government programmes and practices advocacy through charts, banners, slogans, street plays, etc.

Karnataka Northern Diocese has identified talented writers and encouraged them to write on environmental issues

6. PARTNERSHIPS AND ECO-TWINNING

“Gather information on soil contamination, air and water pollution and endangered species and make it available to church members. Invite learned persons to speak at your church” From the CSI Eco-Resources book.

* **Arrange Dialogue** and Programmes with other environmental groups.

* **Arrange environment programs** and eco-partnerships with other churches

* **Create networks with groups** with whom you thought you had nothing in common, but with whom the environment is a shared concern.

* **Bring in experts**, and work together

Diocesan Action on Partnerships and Eco-twinning:

Kanyakumary diocese to collaborate with existing Voluntary Environmental organizations

Karimnagar Diocese: arranging eco-partnerships with other organizations

Nandyal Diocese has created a Partnership with the Korean Church in planting coconut trees, promoting partnerships in other areas.

East Kerala Starting Eco-clubs in schools and parishes and networking with other organizations

Madhya Kerala –All the schools and Colleges have eco clubs and networking with voluntary organisations.

7. CELEBRATION

With your small group or other Christian friends, plan an Earth keeping Day for your fellowship, campus, church or community. Share what God has been unfolding to you about our responsibilities toward the earth, and offer resources to help others begin to practice an earthkeeping ethic. (Biblical Study Sheet)

“We need to recognise that what we do with God's creation around us will have a tremendous effect, for good or ill, on the lives of our grandchildren and on the generations of their children and grandchildren. By our attitude to God's creation now, we determine the nature of the society that will be inherited later this century by the children of our children.” Bishop Thomas Samuel

- **Celebrate an Environmental Festival** with all age groups participating. Make it an annual event. The theme for World Environment Day 2009 was “Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change”. The CSI Synod has already conducted one seminar and a National Consultation on Climate Change to conscientize our Church leaders. We are really proud that as a Church we have taken the initiative in India in thinking Globally and acting Locally to mitigate the effect of global warming.
- **Green Diocese, Green Parish, Green College, Green School Awards**
- **Celebrate Ecology Sunday and Eco-vision month**

Diocesan Action on Celebration:

Kanyakumary diocese, Tirunelvely Diocese, Trichy Tanjore and Karnataka Northern Diocese are all celebrating World Environment day.

Madras diocese is holding Eco-vision Sunday in February and celebrating all of February as Eco-vision month

APPENDICES

Appendix I Let us work together, by Rt. Rev. Thomas Samuel, Chairman, Synod Ecological Concerns Committee

We recognise the riches of God's creation and to address from a Christian perspective the environmental problems of our society. We have failed in our stewardship of creation. Therefore we repent of the way we have polluted, distorted, or destroyed so much of the Creator's work. The degradations of creation can be summed up as 1) land degradation; 2) deforestation; 3) species extinction; 4) water degradation; 5) global toxification; 6) the alteration of atmosphere; 7) human and cultural degradation. The human poverty is both a cause and a consequence of environmental degradation. Environmental problems are more spiritual than technological. God calls us to confess and repent of attitudes which devalue creation. Forgetting that "the earth is the Lord's," we have often simply used creation and forgotten our responsibility to care for it. Our actions and attitudes toward the earth need to proceed from the centre of our faith, and be rooted in the fullness of God's revelation in Christ and the Scriptures. We seek carefully to learn all that the Bible tells us about the Creator, creation, and the human task. In our life and words we declare that full good news for all creation which is still waiting "with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God," (Rom.8:19)

The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has been focusing on Eco-theological education.. We call on all our members to affirm the biblical faith, and to seek ways of living out eco- principles in their personal lives, their churches, and society. Let the Ecological Resource persons training camp may be a turning point in the ministry of CSI.

Let us work together for a Green Church

Appendix II GREEN CHURCH AFFIRMS

Green Church should affirm the concept of sustainable development, as that which seeks to provide an environment that promotes a life of dignity and well-being compatible with the continuation and integrity of supporting ecosystems.. The concept includes the concern that material blessings should be available to successive generations as a fundamental God-given right.

Green Church believes that over-consumption in the North can have a debilitating impact on countries of the South. Consumption of non-renewable resources in the North should be significantly reduced, by increasing recycling and reuse of materials, and by encouraging transition to less material-intensive technologies.

Green Church recognizes that a fundamental cause of poverty is the sinful nature of humankind which manifests itself through violence, greed and self- interest overriding the God-given mandate to meet the needs of both the human and natural creation, and specifically of the poor. Human beings are interdependent with the rest of creation but distinctly human beings are interdependent with the rest of creation but distinctly unique in that they are made in the image of God. We believe that it is of equal importance when addressing the needs of creation to deal adequately with needs of the poor, and specifically to address world hunger.

Green Church recognizes: In poor countries, sustainable development requires first and foremost addressing the following interrelated tasks: the establishment of a just and stable political power; economic development to provide jobs and alleviate poverty; capital investments in human development to stabilize populations and enable people to improve their well-being and their livelihoods; protection of God's creation, in large part by providing poor and landless peoples with alternatives to the over-exploitation of marginal lands; and support for improved development practices that are both appropriate within the culture and to the task.

Green Church recognizes the need of low-income countries, communities, and economies in transition to receive technological, educational and financial assistance to meet the incremental costs of caring for the creation while promoting economic development. Technological possibilities must be in a framework of Christian understanding, the socio-cultural context, and the natural environment. Uncontrolled development of technologies can ultimately threaten the very existence of humanity

Appendix III Statement issued by the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee on 22nd August 2008 after the two day Eco-leadership training programme held at the CSI Synod Centre, Chennai

We, the people of India, are going to face a climatic injustice. The very group of people that has least contributed to the genesis and intensification of a problem is being placed in a position where it must bear its most severe consequences. For, it is precisely this segment of our population that lacks the adaptive capacity to withstand the depredation that future climatic changes may visit upon us.

Global warming will harm people all around the world, especially the world's poor. It is estimated that over 150,000 people die every year, most in developing nations, from the side-effects of global warming, ranging from malaria to malnutrition, and the numbers could almost double by 2020. Even small rises in global temperatures will have such likely impacts as: sea level rise; more frequent heat waves, droughts, and extreme weather events such as torrential rains and floods; increased tropical diseases in now-temperate regions; and hurricanes that are more intense. It could lead to significant reduction in agricultural output, especially in poor countries. Low-lying regions, indeed entire islands, could find themselves under water.

Every faith tradition calls on its followers to protect what God has given us. Scripture tells us, "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). Our energy resources are a gift from the God who created us all. God's message to us at the time of creation was that we are to "till and to tend the garden" (Gen 2:15). What this means to us, as people of faith, is that we have a moral obligation to make responsible choices that protect and preserve God's creation. Energy conservation and efficiency and production of clean energy are means of practicing faithful and responsible stewardship.

Unfortunately, the motivations of greed and acquisition of goods rather than concern for God's creation continues to drive our economy—and much of our world. The prophet Jeremiah had words for those in his society who were counterparts to our more modern profiteers, saying, "From the least to the greatest of them everyone is greedy for unjust gain . . . They have treated the world of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. They acted shamefully . . ." (Jeremiah 6:13-15). We are at a crossroads, and Jeremiah has more to say about how we can proceed from this point: "Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

But stewardship means even more. We are responsible for protecting God's creation because it is intended for the well-being of all creatures, as we are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). People of faith are called upon to "defend the poor and the orphan: do justice to the afflicted" (Ps 82:3), to care for "the least of these" (Matt 25:35), and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 18:19, Matthew 22:39). When we care for God's creation, we practice justice by protecting the vulnerable. Ensuring a cleaner, safer environment means that we care for the elderly and the sick by not putting their lives at risk from harmful pollutants, and that we ensure a safer, more secure future for generations to come.

Christians believe in God as a creator, and we can't honour the maker and disrespect what was made. And since human beings can't live independently of the rest of the biosphere, Jesus' great command to 'love your neighbour' immediately precludes the abuse of your neighbour's land, air, water, and natural resources. Along with the Old Testament's laws about the stewardship of agricultural land for the next generation, the definition of 'neighbour' can mean other people in time as well as in geographical space. And then there are verses of the Bible like Luke 12:48, in which Jesus could well be speaking to the developed nations: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee expresses its deep concern over impact of global warming. As the official body of church of Church of South India to formulate and propagate environmental concerns in Church and Society we consider climate change and abuse of the environment is against God's will. We hope to inform and inspire people of faith to take personal and collective action to reduce global warming emissions. We are destroying our earth. We can't protect human rights if we aren't here. Everyone has a stake and a role in reducing global warming emissions. Working together we can change history. The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee would like to take up the action plan to the grass root level to make it a reality. CSI Ecological decided to collaborate with other groups having similar goals and form a network for effective functioning and co-ordination.

APPENDIX IV Excerpt from CSI Synod Statement, 22nd August 2008 (as above)

We request the Government and concerned agencies to:

1.SAVE WETLANDS

There are over 27,000 wetlands across the country that are rich in biodiversity, recharge groundwater, preserve flora and fauna and are a source of livelihood for those who live around them. But these are fast disappearing because of growing urbanisation and industrialisation. They also face the danger of heavy pollution from sewage and industrial units. There is an urgent need to save these water bodies. After making an inventory and assessing their condition, the state governments must take steps to restore them.

2.Public transportation

The principal option for reducing energy use in our cities is to ensure that mass transportation is efficient, comfortable and reasonable. This would ensure that fewer people use cars or other forms of individual transport. By using CNG as a fuel in buses for public transport, emission levels could be significantly reduced. Metro rail services which run on electricity will also be a big help.

3.TAP THE SUN

Solar power plants are truly going mega, both in size and output. Plants that can generate over 150 MW of power are coming up in several countries. Though it does require heavier capital investment, solar power plants are increasingly becoming viable with the rise in oil prices. India should collaborate with major countries to build numerous such plants across the country.

4. Wind Energy

In terms of renewable energy, few can beat the wind, except of course, the sun. Wind power has been growing in India which now stands at around 8,000 MW, making the country the fourth largest producer in the world.

5. Eco-friendly buildings

Eco-friendly buildings are the latest trend in India. Companies are using recycled materials to erect structures. Air conditioners are being fitted with intelligent sensors to regulate cooling according to the number of people in the room. The Governments should promote green buildings.

6 SAVING RIVERS

The condition of India's rivers is a barometer of the state of the environment. The rivers are dying. Most are highly polluted with domestic sewage, industrial effluents and an erratic waterflow. With global warming, the stress levels on the country's key rivers will only exacerbate. Both, the Centre and the states will have to launch serious drives to revive the ecosystems.